





# Abraham Lincoln's Political Career through 1860

## John Bell Campaign

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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PIEDGED BUT TO TRUTH, TO LIBERTY AND LAW,  
NO FAVOR SWAYS US, AND NO FEAR SHALL AWE."

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INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA.

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### HON. R. W. THOMPSON'S LET- TER.

Just in time to be too late to do any good  
or evil. Hon. R. W. Thompson favored  
the public with a long letter. It appeared  
in the *Daily Journal* last Friday morning.  
It is too long and too worthless to copy en-  
tire. We give a few extracts, to show that  
with all of Mr. Thompson's acknowledged  
ability and worth, he is a very inconsistent  
man. Mr. Thompson is a Bell man. His  
apology therefor is that Bell is a Union  
man, and Mr. Thompson supports him to  
save the Union.

The immediate occasion of this letter  
was the circular from the Kentucky Know-  
Nothings, or Bell, men to their Indiana  
brethren, urging them to vote for Hend-  
ricks, so as to defeat Lincoln. This implies  
of course that they are to vote for Douglas,  
a thing which we have predicted of nine-  
tenths of them, if the result of this week's  
election would indicate that by so doing  
they could give the State to Mr. Douglas.  
We have, from the first, regarded the Bell  
movement as a democratic movement, just  
as the Fillmore movement was—a very  
needless *circum-stump* movement, we think,  
as, but for Bell, nine-tenths of them would  
vote for Douglas directly. We can hardly  
imagine how Mr. Thompson could regard it  
in any other light. He has no hopes of a  
permanent political organization on the  
Union humbug, regarding it as he does in  
the following extracts:

"If the Union were really in danger, and  
we could save it by voting for anybody,  
it would be well to do so, endure the evil  
for a time, and make an effort to throw it  
off. We may well bear present ills with  
philosophy, if we feel a confidence that  
they will produce good results hereafter.  
Do not doubt that our Kentucky friends  
think it is in danger, for, certainly, nothing

of our solemn conviction could prompt them  
to do so as they have. I differ with  
them, and have no fears whatever of its  
permanency if the people will only take the  
Government into their own hands for a  
while.

It is said that the threats of disunion in a  
few Southern States, in the event of Mr. Lin-  
coln's election, is sufficient cause for so  
great an alarm on our part as that we  
should give up the affairs of our State into  
the hands of the men who helped these  
disunionists to grow to their present power  
and predicate our action upon the idea that  
they actually can dissolve the Union. If we  
submit so openly and directly to such threats  
now, we shall thereby make them available  
capital for factionists and demagogues  
for years hereafter. How are they to dissolve  
the Union? That is the practical question.  
In the first place, there are only two States  
at the most three, which have avowed the  
purpose to do so. The ground of their  
avowal is, that they have the right to secede  
from the Union, and that is the end of it.—  
It is the South Carolina doctrine of 1832-33.  
Do our Kentucky friends concede that they  
have this right? I apprehend not. Then  
if they have not, how are they to dissolve  
the Union—with all the other States against  
them, as they will most certainly be. The  
thing is impossible, and, in my judgment,  
it is unwise to concede to the seceders what  
they now ask and what these two committees  
seem disposed to yield, for if we do, we have  
to that extent, recognized their right to se-  
cede—the existence of which, I most em-  
phatically deny.

But what propriety is there in giving way  
to these disunionists, on the ground that they  
will break up the Government if Lincoln  
is elected when their candidate was nomi-  
nated by a convention as sectional as that at  
Chicago? Have they the exclusive right to  
be sectional? The plain truth is that our  
true position is midway between the extreme  
parties, turning neither to the right or the  
left, in obedience either to their threats or  
dictation, but pursuing our own course in  
defense of the Union. We should repudi-  
ate sectionalism at both extremes, and more  
than all, are we bound to frown upon every  
attempt at secession. We should make no  
concession to its treasonable spirit.

That is a bit of good sense, worthy of  
Mr. Thompson's palmiest days—ere he be-  
gan to tremble and to make others tremble  
lest the Union should be dissolved. He  
adds:

"We are asked to vote so as to defeat  
Mr. Lincoln; that is to abandon our own  
principles and to effect a negative result.—  
This concedes that our policy is not worth  
preserving, but that we can lay down our  
principles and take them up again as we do  
our hats and coats. The reason assigned is,  
that if we do not a few Southern States will  
secede. I cannot recognize such a reason  
as controlling my actions, for two reasons:  
first, I don't believe that the people of  
those States wish to secede, and second, I  
do not recognize their right to do so if they  
did wish it."

Bravo, Colonel! Does not this put you  
in an awkward position, unless this disbe-  
lief is a new thing? If they don't want to  
secede, and if they could not, if they did  
want to, why all this ado about it?

Then, if a few Southern States have no  
right to secede; if "nearly the whole" South  
is against disunion, if those who are running  
one sectional candidate could find no decent  
apology for breaking up the Union in con-  
sequence of the success of another sectional  
candidate; if it is wrong to make concession  
to treasonable threats of disunion; if by mak-  
ing such concessions we should foster and  
not crush the treason—why should we, who  
have stood so long midway between the ex-  
tremes, battling against both for our own  
principles of conservatism, break our lines  
all at once, admit that there is no merit in  
our own organization, and go over to an  
obnoxious and ancient adversary to be so  
completely absorbed as to have no distinct  
name or place hereafter. Such an act  
would be without palliation or apology."

For the very best of reasons, Colonel—  
To every body outside of your "organiza-  
tion" it is regarded a humbug. No bod

ever supposed that you thought the Union  
in danger. It has been understood in intel-  
ligent circles, from the first, that your "mid-  
way" was just a convenient stopping place  
for those who hesitated a little about going  
over to the Democracy. The Democracy  
evidently have so regarded it, hence, in this  
emergency they do not hesitate to ask you  
to come over all the way.

"We have stood firmly and manfully for  
a long time—yielding nothing to the defi-  
ance of either of our adversaries—because  
we thought our friends of the slave States  
needed our assistance in rebuking alike the  
agitators of both North and South. But  
now, all at once as suddenly as if we were  
surprised by a flash of lightning from a clear  
sky—these same friends, for whose benefit  
we have so firmly maintained our stand,  
counsel us to give away, disperse and de-  
moralize our little army, and openly ac-  
knowledge before the world that what we  
been all along proclaiming, to justify our  
separate existence as a party, is "mere  
leather and prunella."

You almost provoke us to believe that  
you once regarded it something more. But  
how could you? You knew four years ago  
as well as you know now, that there was  
no danger of disunion. Your friends have  
asked you to be honest and confess up; that  
is all.

"If our party ever shall prevail, I desire  
to see it do so by virtue of its principles,  
and not by becoming the ally of Democ-  
racy and the authors of the repeal of the  
Missouri Compromise. If its principles are  
worth anything they are worth maintaining  
"through good and evil report." If they  
are not, let us say so at once and openly re-  
nounce them at the bidding of our Kentucky  
friends and go right over to one or the other  
of the sectional parties, and help along the  
agitation of slavery and the work of disso-  
lution.

Dissolution of what? Not the Union,  
surely. You said above, that there is no  
danger of that. Truth is, Colonel, you  
have cried wolf, just to scare timid folks so  
often, that even after admitting that there is  
no wolf, you say wolf from habit.



"But we do gain something by Lane's election, in my judgment, and, therefore, I shall vote for him. He is an Old *Whig*—educated in the faith as taught by Henry Clay. He and I have fought so many *Whig* battles together that I think I know all the impulses and inclinations of his mind. His election, therefore, will, upon all the issues of the old parties, revive the spirit of *Whiggery*, for which I been all the time laboring. That will be something gained.

What of Lincoln? Isn't he as old a *Whig* as Lane? Bosh, Colonel! Better come out at once. But lest we should tire your patience, we are done.

Why Hon. R. W. Thompson does not Support Bell.

The Jersey City Standard is responsible for the following:

The treachery of R. W. Thompson, of Indiana, does not surprise his acquaintances here. He is the holder of claims against the Indian tribes to the amount of \$150,000. John Bell reported against them as fraudulent, while a member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. If Bell should be elected, Thompson could not make a dive into the Treasury for the amount. This is the whole story in a nut-shell. Four years ago the Republicans, who are now leading Thompson, accused him of being bribed by the Democrats with an Indian claim of \$40,000, to support Fillmore in Indiana, in order to give Buchanan the State. The truth is, Thompson is a great lobby operator, and manages to make money out of both sides. But he has exposed himself at last, and will be harmless for the future.

Cincinnati Times 9-15-1860







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